



**PATENT APPLICATION**  
Serial No. 10/046,452  
Attorney Docket No. 8449-86523

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

**In re Application of:**

Oscar Jimenez

Serial No.: 10/046,452

**Filed: January 14, 2002**

**Title: Angioplasty Super Balloon  
Fabrication With Composite Materials**

Group Art Unit: 1772

**Examiner: Sandra M. Nolan**

**DECLARATION OF OSCAR JIMENEZ UNDER RULE 131**

TO: Commissioner of Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**Dear Sir:**

I, Oscar Jimenez, residing at 8000 Los Pinos Boulevard, Coral Gables, Florida 33143 declare as follows:

1. I am the inventor in the above-identified patent application.
2. During the spring of 2001, I conceived the idea of making a reinforced balloon which I called a super balloon and which was to be made of a nano-composite reinforced polymer including a polymer, i.e., nylon 12, and one of carbon nano-tubes, a nano-clay or nano-ceramic fibers, i.e., nano-tubes formed into a balloon for medical applications, i.e., angioplasty, and having an increased tensile strength over balloons already in the marketplace.

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**

3. I then proceeded to make such a super balloon by first obtaining nanocomposite pellets, nano-tubes, from Electrovac GesmbH of Klosterneuburg, Austria, and virgin nylon 12 pellets, made by Allied Signal (now Honeywell Intl., Inc) of Hopewell Va., from a plastic supplier. Next I requested Foster Corporation to blend, compound and pelletize the nylon 12 pellets and the nano-tubes into extruded pellets for use in fabricating the balloon. Attached and marked Exhibit 1 is a copy of a Purchase Order to Foster Corporation dated May 22, 2001, for the purchase of polymer and nanocomposite pellets.
4. Foster Corporation first took the virgin nylon 12 pellets, 95.75% by weight of the total combination, and added a small amount, 1.25% by weight, of oxidized polyethylene, a well known internal lubricant in the plastic compounding industry made by Allied Signal and then added 3% by weight carbon nano-tubes 3% made by Electrovac of Austria. The composition was then put into a tumbler to disperse, mix and blend the nano-tubes with the nylon 12. Next the blend, matrix or composition was put into a twin blade compounding screw which extruded the matrix (much like meat from a meat grinder) and the extrudate was cut into pellets. The resulting pellets are then ready for extrusion
5. In June 2001, after receiving the black, polymer and nano-tube pellets (A sample of same being attached as Exhibit 2) from Foster Corporation I fabricated in my laboratory at Cathion LLC, 9344 N.W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Miami Florida 33172 my first super balloon.
6. This was done by first placing the black pellets into a standard air mandrel extruder and extruding the black pellets under heat and pressure to extrude a thin tube. Then the tube was placed into a standard balloon blower to make a balloon in the tube. I pulled the tube while blowing the tube to make a balloon with a wall thickness of 0.001 inch or less. Also, the extrusion and pulling oriented the nano-

tubes in the direction, axial direction, of plastic flow. Then the ends of the balloon were cut off and the ends were heat or laser welded to a PTCA catheter or a PTA catheter. The balloon I made is attached as Exhibit 3.

7. I then prepared an Invention Disclosure that I sent to my patent attorney, Mr. Thomas Vigil. Attached as Exhibit 4 is a copy of the Invention Disclosure having a date of July 15, 2001 and attached as Exhibit 5 is a copy of the revised draft of the Invention Disclosure dated July 18, 2003.
8. Further I faxed my attorney on July 24, 2001 requesting that we add nano-scale ceramic fibers to my Invention Disclosure. Enclosed as Exhibit 6 is a copy of my two page Fax dated July 24, 2001
9. The foregoing statements and attached documents show that I had conceived and reduced to practice before July 1, 2001 my super balloon comprising a nano-composite reinforced polymer including a polymer, nylon 12, and one of carbon nano-tubes, a nano clay or nano-ceramic fibers, namely nano-tubes, for medical applications, namely a balloon catheter having a high strength balloon for resisting bursting during over inflation of the balloon.

Further, I declare under the penalties of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the above statements are true and correct and that those made on information and belief are believed to be correct and any false statements so made herein will affect the validity of the subject patent application or the patent issuing thereon.

August 25, 2004  
Date

  
Oscar Jimenez



# CARDIOVASCULAR INSTRUMENTATION

**Confidential**

PURCHASE REQUISITION No: Do Not Fill  
PURCH. ORDER DATE: Do Not Fill  
APPROVED VENDOR REQUIRED - (YES/NO): YES  
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE SYSTEM - ACCOUNT No: Do Not Fill  
VENDOR ASSIGNED ACCT. TO CATHION No: Do Not Fill

## VasCon, LLC

9344 NW 13 Street Suite 200  
Miami Florida 33172-2808

www.vasconllc.com  
Ph.: 305/477-2406

Fax: 305/592-6605  
Fax: 305/592-0826

PUR. REQ. DATE: 22-May-2001

### Vendor

Name: Janet  
Company: Foster Corporation  
Address: 329 Lake Road, PO Box 997  
City: Dayville St: CT ZIP: 06241  
Phone: (860) 774-3964 Fax: (860) 779-0805  
E-mail: [foster.corp@fostercomp.co](mailto:foster.corp@fostercomp.co)

### Requisitioned by / Ship To

Name: Cliff Taylor  
Company: VasCon, LLC  
Address: 9344 NW 13 Street Suite 200  
City: Miami St: FL ZIP: 33172-2808  
Phone: 305/477-2406 X-111 Fax: 305/592-6605  
E-mail: [ctaylor@vasconllc.com](mailto:ctaylor@vasconllc.com) Fax: 305/592-0826

Qty	Units	Description	Unit Price	TOTAL
50	lbs	Grilamid L25-6086 + 5% Nanocomposite	25.0000	1,250.00

Foster to supply all raw materials

C of C Required with Shipment that includes:

- 1) Material and manufacturer name for each component.
- 2) Material lot number for each component.
- 3) Vendors identifying component lot Number.
- 4) Final percentage by weight of each component.



### Payment Information

Credit Card:  
Name:  
Credit Card No:  
Exp Date:  
Check:  
On Account: Do Not Fill

Please Provide  
Confirmation of  
Receipt of this  
Purchase Order

SubTotal 1,250.00  
Shipping & Handling  
SubTotal + Sh. & Hndlg. 1,250.00  
Taxes (If Applicable)  
Other  
TOTAL 1,250.00

### Shipping Information

Carrier: Date:

### This P.O. Approved by:

Oscar Jimenez 00000000

This P.O. is not valid without an authorized signature.

Vendor's Quote/Order No: Quote # 3893  
Sales Rep/Contact: Janet

Dear Vendor:

To ensure prompt payment, please  
include our P.O. # in your Invoice  
and Packing List.

### Remarks:

1. A Certificate of Compliance or Certificate of Analysis is required: ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. An MSDS, if applicable, is required with shipment: ☐ Yes ☒ No
3. Supplier agrees to notify Cathion Corporation of changes in the product or service specifications or process so that Cathion Corporation may determine whether the changes may affect the quality of the finished device.

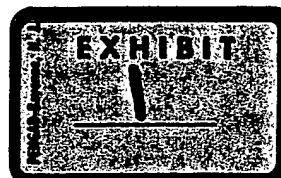
Requisitioned by Cliff Taylor

23-Dec-2003

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Foster PO 1.xls

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# ANGIOPLASTY BALLOON FABRICATION WITH COMPOSITE MATERIALS

Invention Disclosure  
Second Draft  
(July 15, 2001)

## ABSTRACT

Angioplasty balloons are required to be able to withstand very high pressures, which force the balloon's surface against various tissues and deposits representing a range of viscoelastic characteristics, and include some very hard and rough surfaces. As the balloons must be thin-walled to collapse into a small cross-section for introduction to the target area, the balloons must be made extremely strong and puncture resistant. The balloons also must expand in a predictable manner when the internal pressure is beyond the nominal value where the cross-section is rated. To meet these exacting requirements this patent disclosure presents a number of methods of creating composite films of organic polymers and inorganic additives on a nanometric scale. The preparation and formation of balloons using specifically carbon nanotubes and clay platelets is presented.

## BACKGROUND

Angioplasty addresses the problems of partially or fully obstructed arteries. Angioplasty balloons have been used by invasive cardiologists since the 1970s when Andreas Grunzig reported his data on reopening the occluded coronary arteries of five patients and that these arteries remained patent, open, allowing blood flow for six months or longer. The Grunzig procedure involved the introduction of a high-pressure angiographic catheter with a collapsed polymer balloon cemented to its distal portion. Once the catheter is positioned within the occluded range in the artery under fluoroscopic control, the balloon is pressurized, typically by injecting a fluid. The pressure in the balloon exerts pressure on the surrounding obstructive structures and enlarges the lumen, the cross section for blood flow. The balloon is depressurized until it collapses and it then can be withdrawn from the obstructed site where circulation has been restored through this maneuver.

As angioplasty, the reforming of blood vessels, has gained acceptance and replaced to a great extent the coronary artery bypass graft procedure, a major surgical intervention, the demands for the performance of the balloon catheter have increased. These demands include high strength to withstand pressures on the order of 10 to 20 atmospheres. In comparison, the typical passenger car's tires are inflated to about 32 psi or slightly above 2 atm. above the ambient pressure. While the typical tire wall is a composite, the walls are reinforced by high strength weaves of polyester filaments or stainless steel wires embedded in



a viscoelastic matrix, such as neoprene, the typical angioplasty balloon is made of a polymer film with its wall thickness in the vicinity of 0.001" or 25 micrometers. Thus the stress in the angioplasty balloon is determined by about ten times higher internal pressure in a wall that is about one twohundredth the thickness, hence its stress is estimated to be 2000 times greater than in a tire. Both tires and balloon catheters encounter similar excess strain when they press against sharp objects. Automobile tires are usually designed to be puncture-proof when being pressed against a sharp nail, they are to allow the metal tip to penetrate while forming at least a temporary seal around it. The balloon catheter's wall may be exposed to the sharp edges of crystalline deposits. The ratio of the wall's thickness to the length of the puncturing object is much more favorable for the tire than for the angioplasty balloon, hence the balloon must exhibit great resistance to cuts by the sharp edges of the crystalline deposit in a plaque, the obstructive body in the vessel. Thirdly, both the automobile tire and the angioplasty balloon must be able to withstand overinflation without excessive plastic flow or rupture. In case the plaque to be broken by the inflated balloon is hard, dense and strong, the physician often attempts to inflate the balloon above its nominal pressure to increase the balloon's diameter in a predictable manner. For such events it is important to know the relationship between the desired additional diameter for the balloon above the rated value and the pressure necessary to achieve that.

When monomers in the general family of amides are polymerized to form polyamides, or Nylons, the strength of the balloon made from such materials is usually not isotropic, because the polymer chains are oriented to be parallel to the axis of the inflated balloon. The reason for this is rooted in the way the balloon is designed to fail in case it is overinflated beyond its failure stress level. The balloon is expected to split parallel to the catheter's axis to enable the withdrawal of the fractured balloon without leaving any portion behind. Such debris would typically require surgical removal that is possibly as traumatic as the bypass procedure that the angioplasty was expected to avoid.

The balloons, unlike tires, must also have lubricious surfaces and must be chemically inert. Polyamide or Nylon films generally meet these requirements.

Films made with certain polymer films containing either carbon nanotubes or clay platelets offer greater strength for the balloon without sacrifice of the viscoelastic properties necessary for overinflation.

Carbon nanotubes were discovered by accident by Sumio Iijima, in 1991, in soot. Their properties have been studied extensively and the strength, flexibility and conductivity of the individual nanotubes have been measured with remarkable results. While singly, the nanotubes, characterized by approximately one nanometer diameter ( $10^{-9}$  m or 0.001 micrometer) have found few practical uses, they have been considered as the high strength component in composite materials. The physical characteristics of long nanotubes, which may reach a

micrometer in length, suggest their use for conducting elements between semiconductor gates. Electron microscopists have observed carbon nanotubes with single or multiple but concentric cylindrical walls.

One of the factors which have delayed the use of nanotubes in composite materials is their extremely high cost. Some of this cost is associated with the difficulties in producing the nanotubes, typically from arc discharges. Another reason for the high cost is that often the electronic application requires a degree of uniformity in tube length and in the number of layers. The cost of a gram of uniform nanotubes has been in the range of \$100 to over \$1000. While this cost is a deterrent, the quantities of nanotubes needed for the manufacturing of angioplasty balloons are very small. For instance, a typical balloon may have 25 micrometer wall thickness and an equivalent diameter of 3 mm and length of 30 mm. The volume of material in such a balloon is merely 7 mm<sup>3</sup>. Further assuming that the volume ratio of carbon nanotubes to the volume of material is not more than 0.3, the volume of carbon nanotubes required is about 2 mm<sup>3</sup>. The mass of carbon in the balloon, assuming that the density is about 2 grams/cm<sup>3</sup>, is about 4 milligrams and its direct cost at \$100 per gram is \$0.40 per balloon.

As the cost of producing carbon nanotubes is declining, the composite material is economically practical in such demanding and relatively cost insensitive applications as coronary angioplasty.

## **PRIOR ART**

Balloon fabrication has been extensively addressed by US Patents. For example, US Patent 5,868,704 Balloon Catheter Device (Issue date: Feb. 9, 1999, filing date, June 26, 1996) by Campbell, Laguna and Spencer, assigned to W.I. Gore & Associates, describes composite balloon materials where the components are polymers, typically porous polytetrafluorethylene (PTFE) films combined with an elastomer to achieve some of the properties described in the BACKGROUND section of this disclosure. One particular embodiment involves helically wound ribbons progressing in opposite directions to each other with specific pitch between the adjacent turns of the ribbon. The layers are thermally bonded to each other.

US Patent 5,506,049 of Swei and Arthur, assigned to Rogers Corp. is titled **Particulate Filled Composite Film and Method of Making Same**, teaches the fabrication of films made with fluoropolymers filled with small particles for use as dielectric substrates.

US Patent 4,330,587 of Woodbrey, assigned to Monsanto Co. is titled **Metal-Thermoplastic-Metal Laminates**, teaches the fabrication of films which may be formed easily and exhibit high tensile strength. The core layer is polyamide or polyester sandwiched between aluminum alloy layers. This patent addresses applications calling for relatively thick layers where the core layer is between 0.01

and 0.09 inches (0.25 mm to 2.3 mm), with metal coatings of 0.002 to 0.0085 inches (50 to 210 micrometers).

US Patent 5,587,125 of Roychowdhury, assigned to Schneider (USA) Inc. is titled **Non-Coextrusion Method of Making Multi-Layer Angioplasty Balloons**, teaches the fabrication of composite cylinders by fusing concentric tubes which then undergo blow molding.

US Patent 5,691,015 of Tsukamoto and Shimizu, assigned to Aicello Chemical Co. in Japan, is titled **Composite Film Bags for Packaging**, also teaches the fabrication of composite films, but those are used for making large bags suitable for storing chemical agents for agriculture where the outer film may be peeled off and the inner film is water soluble. When it is buried in soil, the film dissolves in water to release the agent.

US Patent 5,746,968 of Radisch, Jr., assigned to Interventional Technologies, Inc. is titled **Method for Manufacturing a High Strength Angioplasty Balloon**, presents a method to increase the strength of a polymer balloon by special processing that results in directional orientation of the polymer chains using overstretching the balloon at an appropriate temperature. The method is claimed to preempt pinholes arising from the stretching steps. The balloon is not a composite.

US Patent 5,270,086 of Hamlin, assigned to Schneider (USA), with the title **Multilayer Extrusion of Angioplasty Balloons**, presents a method to fabricate multiplayer balloons by coextrusion, which have stable dimensions when stretched by pressurization.

US Patent 5,647,848 of Jorgensen, assigned to Meadox Medical, Inc., with the title **High Strength Low Compliance Composite Balloon for Balloon Catheters**, presents an elastomeric film that is restricted in its expansion under pressure by a constraining structure of filaments of high strength polymers such as Aramide, polyethylene or steel, carbon and so on. The result is a balloon strengthened against overexpansion by the helical filaments wound counter to one another.

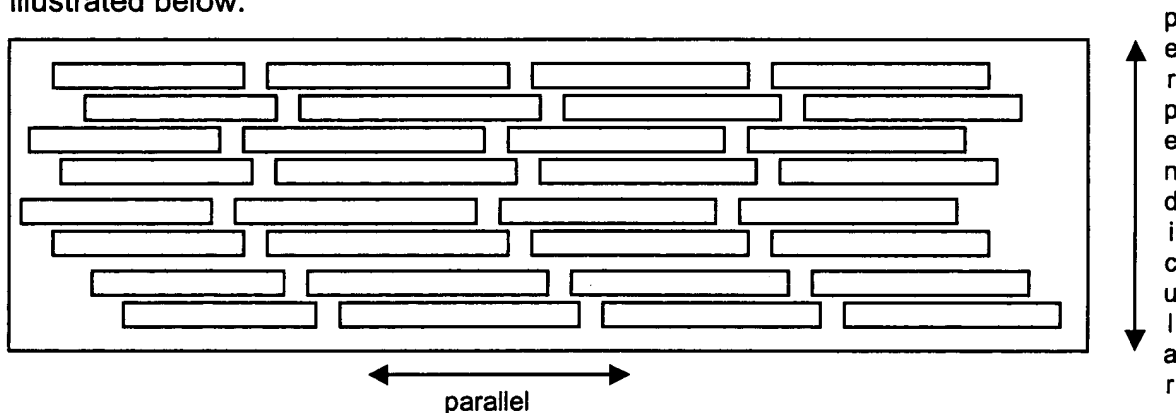
The Foster Corporation of Daywill, CT announced the availability of Nylon 12 based nanocomposites with low percentages of loading, on the order of a few percent, yet achieving a significant (65%) increase in the composite's flexural modulus and an even more significant (135%) increase in elongation. "A real increase in rigidity without brittleness is what designers have been dreaming for tubing and film applications." – stated an April 2001 news release. These properties seem to be needed for future angioplasty balloons.

The method of fabrication of angioplasty balloons and similar devices for delivering stents and other forms of therapy with carbon nanotube enhanced

composite materials will be described. However, there is an alternate method to fabricate high strength composite balloons that will be described first. The alternate method is based on the use of "nanoclays" occurring in natural clays. These clays contain platelets on a nanometric scale, which may be pretreated to bond strongly to the polymer matrix. Such nanoclays were described by Karl Kamena: An Emerging Family of Nanomer® Nanoclays for the Plastics Industry ([http://nanocor.com/tech\\_papers/nano\\_plastics.htm](http://nanocor.com/tech_papers/nano_plastics.htm)). Wet clay is a naturally plastic material. It consists of flat platelets which can slide on one another when wet, when the platelets are perfused with water. These platelets may be mixed with a monomer that forms a plastic material that can be molded or extruded into tubes and subsequently expanded into the desired balloon shape.

## FABRICATION

The process to disperse the nanoparticles in the host matrix may be aimed to be isotropic or oriented. Clay platelets improve can slide with respect to one another, hence their elastic behavior is more pronounced in a plane parallel to the plates, while they are much more stiff in the orthogonal direction, as illustrated below:



Such a structure is more responsive to tension in the parallel direction than in the perpendicular one. Random orientation of the platelets would provide more isotropic improvement in strength at a lesser magnitude. Depending on the adhesion between the plates in the matrix and the matrix the elastic behavior of the film that has parallel plates could be controlled. Therefore, there are at least three ways to influence the behavior of the composite: (1) by controlling the volume percent of platelets in the matrix; (2) by controlling the "wetting" of the platelets by the matrix; and (3) by controlling the orientation of the platelets within the matrix. **The preferred parameters for these three properties are yet to be determined.** However, it is evident that one can make use of various known techniques to make clay nanoplatelets wettable. Nanocor, Inc. had concentrated on montmorillonite, a specific form of clay platelets, which can be modified to adhere to polymers. Montmorillonite is a "swelling" clay. It is able to absorb 20 to 30 times more water than its own starting volume. The layers are about 1 nm thick and its parallel dimensions are about 1000 times longer. Nanocor reports that when a small amount of water is added to montmorillonite (8-10% by weight)

the platelets are spaced in "galleries" or layers with 0.3 to 0.5 nm spacing between them. US Patent 6,242,500 issued to Lan et al. on June 5, 2001, discusses the use of onium ions to convert hydrophilic clay surfaces to hydrophobic one to enable enlarge the gallery height and bonding.

It is well known that phyllosilicates, such as smectite clays, e.g., sodium montmorillonite and calcium montmorillonite, can be treated with organic molecules, such as organic ammonium ions, to intercalate the organic molecules between adjacent, planar silicate layers, for bonding the organic molecules with a polymer, for intercalation of the polymer between the layers, thereby substantially increasing the interlayer (interlaminar) spacing between the adjacent silicate layers. The thus-treated, intercalated phyllosilicates, having interlayer spacings of at least about 10-20 .ANG. and up to about 100 Angstroms, then can be exfoliated, e.g., the silicate layers are separated, e.g., mechanically, by high shear mixing. **The individual silicate layers, when admixed with a matrix polymer, before, after or during the polymerization of the matrix polymer, e.g., a polyamide--see U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,739,007; 4,810,734; and 5,385,776--have been found to substantially improve one or more properties of the polymer, such as mechanical strength and/or high temperature characteristics.**

Exemplary prior art **composites**, also called "nanocomposites", are disclosed in published PCT disclosure of Allied Signal, Inc. WO 93/04118 and U.S. Pat. No. 5,385,776, disclosing the admixture of individual platelet particles derived from intercalated layered silicate materials, with a polymer to form a polymer matrix having one or more properties of the matrix polymer improved by the addition of the exfoliated intercalate. As disclosed in WO 93/04118, the intercalate is formed (the interlayer spacing between adjacent silicate platelets is increased) by adsorption of a silane coupling agent or an **onium** cation, such as a quaternary ammonium compound, having a reactive group which is compatible with the matrix polymer. **Such quaternary ammonium cations are well known to convert a highly hydrophilic clay, such as sodium or calcium montmorillonite, into an organophilic clay capable of sorbing organic molecules.** A publication that discloses direct intercalation (without solvent) of polystyrene and poly(ethylene oxide) in organically modified silicates is Synthesis and Properties of Two-Dimensional Nanostructures by Direct Intercalation of Polymer Melts in Layered Silicates, Richard A. Vaia, et al., Chem. Mater., 5:1694-1696(1993). Also as disclosed in Adv. Materials, 7, No. 2: (1985), pp, 154-156, New Polymer Electrolyte Nanocomposites: Melt Intercalation of Poly(Ethylene Oxide) in Mica-Type Silicates, Richard A. Vaia, et al., poly(ethylene oxide) can be intercalated directly into Na-montmorillonite and Li-montmorillonite by heating to 80.degree. C. for 2-6 hours to achieve a d-spacing of 17.7 .ANG.. The intercalation is accompanied by displacing water molecules, disposed between the clay platelets, with polymer molecules. Apparently, however, the intercalated material could not be exfoliated and was tested in pellet form. It was quite surprising to one of the authors of these articles that exfoliated material could be manufactured in accordance with the present invention.

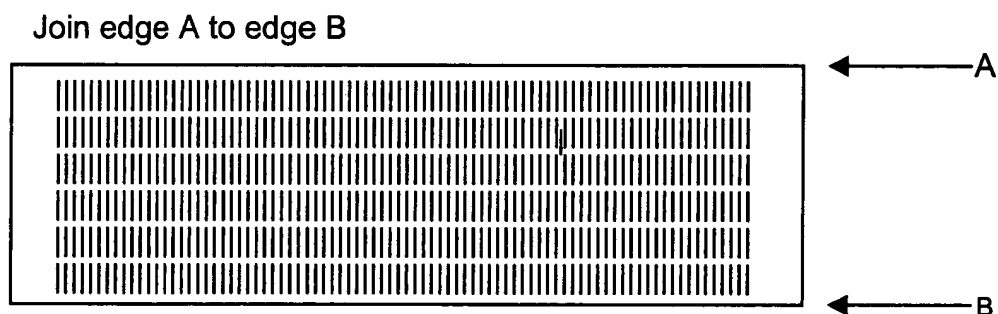
The surface modification of the montmorillonite platelets and their integration into a polyamide or nylon polymer is an established art and not part of this disclosure. It was also described in considerable detail in "Synthesis and Characterisation of Thermoset-Clay Nanocomposites" by Xavier Kornman in a publication of Lulea Tekniska Universitet, Sweden.

The specific goal of this disclosure is to specify the method of treatment of the platelets, the percentage of platelets within the matrix, the preferred method of compounding, the formation of the blank tubes which can be expanded into angiographic balloons for catheters, and the method of attaching the balloon to the catheter body.

The process may begin with a polymer sheet of yet to be specified thickness that may be cut and fused into tubes whose wall thickness is considerably greater than necessary for making balloons for angioplasty catheters. Once the tubes are fused, they may be drawn down to the dimensions by well-established methods and formed into balloons by heating the thermoplastic tubes under pressure within a mold.

The method of creating composites with carbon nanotubes is based on the compounding of  $x$  percent of the available nanotubes in a polymer matrix. Again, tubes are formed with the nanotubes oriented primarily along the axis of the balloon.

To enhance the resistance of the balloon tangentially, the original compounding may be followed by rolling and stretching the polymer to orient the nanotubes in one direction and then forming the tubes such that the nanotubes are originally oriented tangentially in the wall of the tube:



The tube is closed and sealed:



This tube is ready for being drawn out and then expanded. When it is in its final form, the orientation of the nanotubes should be somewhat randomized but oriented circumferentially on the average to increase the strength of the tube.

Naturally, the use of nanocomposites in thin tubular balloons is not limited to angioplasty in coronary vessels, but also to general area of medical applications of balloons, including valvuloplasty, the minimally invasive repair of heart valves, angioplasty in peripheral vessels, especially in the

carotid arteries, the repair of aneurysms by the insertion of balloons, even the possibility to insert balloons in the stomach for the purpose of reducing the subject's appetite (in the past the procedure failed on account of the balloon tearing and obstructing the intestinal path). All of these and other applications may be candidates for claims in an eventual patent application.

*Robert*  
*Please*  
*file*

CONFIDENTIAL  
INVENTION DISCLOSURE

ANGIOPLASTY SUPER BALLOON FABRICATION WITH  
COMPOSITE MATERIALS

Oscar Jimenez  
Cathion, LLC  
Miami, FL 33172

(Final Draft)  
(18 July 2001)

**ABSTRACT**

Angioplasty balloons are required to be able to withstand very high pressures, which force the balloon's surface against various vessel tissues and deposits representing a range of viscoelastic characteristics, and include some very hard and rough surfaces. As the balloons must be thin-walled to collapse into a small profile (cross-section) for introduction to the target area, the balloons must be made extremely strong and puncture resistant. The balloons also must expand in a predictable manner when the internal pressure is beyond the nominal value where the cross-section is rated. In additions, balloon catheters are also used to deploy metallic stents within a constricted vessel. Stents are expandable wire mesh devices that help retain proper vessel lumen after dilation. In this application, the balloon must come in contact with a metallic mesh that may inflict damage to the balloon. To meet these exacting requirements this intellectual property disclosure presents a number of methods of creating composite films of organic polymers and inorganic additives on a nanometric scale. The preparation



and formation of balloons using specifically carbon nanotubes and clay platelets is presented.

## **BACKGROUND**

Angioplasty addresses the problems related to partially or fully obstructed blood vessels. Angioplasty balloons have been used by invasive cardiologists since the 1970s when Andreas Grunzig reported his data on reopening the occluded coronary arteries of five patients and that these arteries remained patent, open, allowing blood flow for six months or longer. The Grunzig procedure involved the introduction of a high-pressure angiographic catheter with a deflated or collapsed polymer balloon cemented to its distal portion. Once the catheter is positioned within the occluded range (lesion) in the artery under fluoroscopic control, the balloon is pressurized, typically by injecting a fluid. The pressure in the balloon exerts pressure on the surrounding obstructive structures and enlarges the lumen, which results in an increase in blood flow. Subsequently, the balloon is depressurized until it collapses and it then can be withdrawn from the obstructed site where circulation has been restored through this maneuver.

As angioplasty, the reforming of blood vessels, has gained acceptance and replaced to a great extent the conventional coronary artery bypass graft

procedure, a major surgical intervention, the demands for the performance of the balloon catheter have increased. These demands include high strength balloons to withstand pressures on the order of 10 to 20 atmospheres. In comparison, the typical passenger car's tires are inflated to about 32 psi or slightly above 2 atm. above the ambient pressure. While the typical tire wall is a composite, the walls are reinforced by high strength weaves of polyester filaments or stainless steel wires embedded in a viscoelastic matrix, such as neoprene, the typical angioplasty balloon is made of a polymer film with its wall thickness in the vicinity of 0.001" or 25 micrometers. Thus the stress in the angioplasty balloon is determined by about ten times higher internal pressure in a wall that is about one twohundredth the thickness, hence its stress is estimated to be 2000 times greater than in a tire. Both tires and balloon catheters encounter similar excess strain when they press against sharp objects. Automobile tires are usually designed to be puncture-proof when being pressed against a sharp nail, they are to allow the metal tip to penetrate while forming at least a temporary seal around it. The balloon catheter's wall may be exposed to the sharp edges of crystalline deposits. The ratio of the wall's thickness to the length of the puncturing object is much more favorable for the tire than for the angioplasty balloon, hence the balloon must exhibit great resistance to cuts by the sharp edges of the crystalline deposit in a plaque, the obstructive body in the vessel. Thirdly, both the automobile tire and the angioplasty balloon must be able to withstand overinflation without excessive plastic flow or rupture. In case the plaque to be broken by the inflated balloon is hard, dense and strong, the physician often

attempts to inflate the balloon above its nominal pressure to increase the balloon's diameter in a predictable manner. For such events it is important to know the relationship between the desired additional diameter for the balloon above the rated value and the pressure necessary to achieve that.

When monomers in the general family of amides are polymerized to form polyamides, or Nylons, the strength of the balloon made from such materials is usually not isotropic, because the polymer chains are oriented to be parallel to the axis of the inflated balloon. The reason for this is rooted in the way the balloon is designed to fail in case it is overinflated beyond its failure stress level. The balloon is expected to split parallel to the catheter's axis to enable the withdrawal of the fractured balloon without leaving any portion behind. Such debris would typically require surgical removal that is possibly as traumatic as the bypass procedure that the angioplasty was expected to avoid.

The balloons, unlike tires, must also have lubricious surfaces and must be chemically inert. Polyamide or Nylon films generally meet these requirements.

Films made with certain polymer films containing either carbon nanotubes or clay platelets offer greater strength for the balloon without sacrifice of the viscoelastic properties necessary for overinflation.

Carbon nanotubes were discovered by accident by Sumio Iijima, in 1991, in soot. Their properties have been studied extensively and the strength, flexibility and conductivity of the individual nanotubes have been measured with remarkable results. While singly, the nanotubes, characterized by approximately one nanometer diameter ( $10^{-9}$  m or 0.001 micrometer) have found few practical uses, they have been considered as the high strength component in composite materials. The physical characteristics of long nanotubes, which may reach a micrometer in length, suggest their use for conducting elements between semiconductor gates. Electron microscopists have observed carbon nanotubes with single or multiple but concentric cylindrical walls.

One of the factors which have delayed the use of nanotubes in composite materials is their extremely high cost. Some of this cost is associated with the difficulties in producing the nanotubes, typically from arc discharges. Another reason for the high cost is that often the electronic application requires a degree of uniformity in tube length and in the number of layers. The cost of a gram of uniform nanotubes has been in the range of \$100 to over \$1000. While this cost is a deterrent, the quantities of nanotubes needed for the manufacturing of angioplasty balloons are very small. For instance, a typical balloon may have 25 micrometer wall thickness and an equivalent diameter of 3 mm and length of 30 mm. The volume of material in such a balloon is merely  $7 \text{ mm}^3$ . Further assuming that the volume ratio of carbon nanotubes to the volume of material is not more than 0.3, the volume of carbon nanotubes required is about  $2 \text{ mm}^3$ . The mass of

carbon in the balloon, assuming that the density is about  $2 \text{ grams/cm}^3$ , is about 4 milligrams and its direct cost at \$100 per gram is \$0.40 per balloon.

As the cost of producing carbon nanotubes is declining, the composite material is economically practical in such demanding and relatively cost insensitive applications as coronary angioplasty.

## **PRIOR ART**

Balloon fabrication has been extensively addressed by US Patents. For example, US Patent 5,868,704 Balloon Catheter Device (Issue date: Feb. 9, 1999, filing date, June 26, 1996) by Campbell, Laguna and Spencer, assigned to W.I. Gore & Associates, describes composite balloon materials where the components are polymers, typically porous polytetrafluorethylene (PTFE) films combined with an elastomer to achieve some of the properties described in the BACKGROUND section of this disclosure. One particular embodiment involves helically wound ribbons progressing in opposite directions to each other with specific pitch between the adjacent turns of the ribbon. The layers are thermally bonded to each other.

US Patent 5,506,049 of Swei and Arthur, assigned to Rogers Corp. is titled **Particulate Filled Composite Film and Method of Making Same**, teaches the

fabrication of films made with fluoropolymers filled with small particles for use as dielectric substrates.

US Patent 4,330,587 of Woodbrey, assigned to Monsanto Co. is titled **Metal-Thermoplastic-Metal Laminates**, teaches the fabrication of films which may be formed easily and exhibit high tensile strength. The core layer is polyamide or polyester sandwiched between aluminum alloy layers. This patent addresses applications calling for relatively thick layers where the core layer is between 0.01 and 0.09 inches (0.25 mm to 2.3 mm), with metal coatings of 0.002 to 0.0085 inches (50 to 210 micrometers).

US Patent 5,587,125 of Roychowdhury, assigned to Schneider (USA) Inc. is titled **Non-Coextrusion Method of Making Multi-Layer Angioplasty Balloons**, teaches the fabrication of composite cylinders by fusing concentric tubes which then undergo blow molding.

US Patent 5,691,015 of Tsukamoto and Shimizu, assigned to Aicello Chemical Co. in Japan, is titled **Composite Film Bags for Packaging**, also teaches the fabrication of composite films, but those are used for making large bags suitable for storing chemical agents for agriculture where the outer film may be peeled off and the inner film is water soluble. When it is buried in soil, the film dissolves in water to release the agent.

US Patent 5,746,968 of Radisch, Jr., assigned to Interventional Technologies, Inc. is titled **Method for Manufacturing a High Strength Angioplasty Balloon**, presents a method to increase the strength of a polymer balloon by special processing that results in directional orientation of the polymer chains using overstretching the balloon at an appropriate temperature. The method is claimed to preempt pinholes arising from the stretching steps. The balloon is not a composite.

US Patent 5,270,086 of Hamlin, assigned to Schneider (USA), with the title **Multilayer Extrusion of Angioplasty Balloons**, presents a method to fabricate multiplayer balloons by coextrusion, which have stable dimensions when stretched by pressurization.

US Patent 5,647,848 of Jorgensen, assigned to Meadox Medical, Inc., with the title **High Strength Low Compliance Composite Balloon for Balloon Catheters**, presents an elastomeric film that is restricted in its expansion under pressure by a constraining structure of filaments of high strength polymers such as Aramide, polyethylene or steel, carbon and so on. The result is a balloon strengthened against overexpansion by the helical filaments wound counter to one another.

Nylon 12 based nanocomposites with low percentages of loading, on the order of a 2-5 percent, have achieved a significant (65%) decrease in the composite's

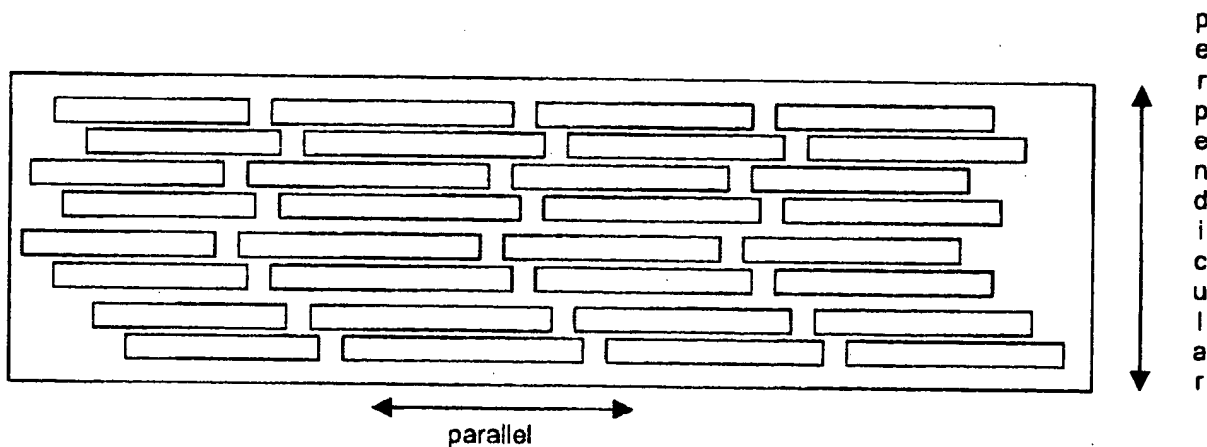
flexural modulus and an even more significant (135%) increase in elongation. These properties seem to be needed for future angioplasty balloons as well as for stent deployment systems.

The method of fabrication of angioplasty balloons and similar devices for delivering stents and other forms of therapy with carbon nanotube enhanced composite materials will be described. However, there is an alternate method to fabricate high strength composite balloons that will be described first. The alternate method is based on the use of "nanoclays" occurring in natural clays. These clays contain platelets on a nanometric scale, which may be pretreated to bond strongly to the polymer matrix. Such nanoclays were described by Karl Kamena: An Emerging Family of Nanomer® Nanoclays for the Plastics Industry ([http://nanocor.com/tech\\_papers/nano\\_plastics.htm](http://nanocor.com/tech_papers/nano_plastics.htm)). Wet clay is a naturally plastic material. It consists of flat platelets which can slide on one another when wet, when the platelets are perfused with water. These platelets may be mixed with a monomer that forms a plastic material that can be molded or extruded into tubes and subsequently processed expanded into the desired balloon shape.

## **FABRICATION**

The process to disperse the nanoparticles in the host matrix may be aimed to be isotropic or oriented. Clay platelets improve can slide with respect to one another, hence their elastic behavior is more pronounced in a plane parallel to

the plates, while they are much more stiff in the orthogonal direction, as illustrated below:



Such a structure is more responsive to tension in the parallel direction than in the perpendicular one. Random orientation of the platelets would provide more isotropic improvement in strength at a lesser magnitude. Depending on the adhesion between the plates in the matrix and the matrix the elastic behavior of the film that has parallel plates could be controlled. Therefore, there are at least three ways to influence the behavior of the composite: (1) by controlling the volume percent of platelets in the matrix; (2) by controlling the "wetting" of the platelets by the matrix; and (3) by controlling the orientation of the platelets within the matrix. **Integration of these three properties will render an optimum material for the intended application.** It is evident that one can make use of various known techniques to make clay nanoplatelets wettable. Nanocor, Inc. had concentrated on montmorillonite, a specific form of clay platelets, which can be modified to adhere to polymers. Montmorillonite is a "swelling" clay. It is able to absorb 20 to 30 times more water than its own starting volume. The layers are

about 1 nm thick and its parallel dimensions are about 1000 times longer.

Nanocor reports that when a small amount of water is added to montmorillonite (8-10% by weight) the platelets are spaced in "galleries" or layers with 0.3 to 0.5 nm spacing between them. US Patent 6,242,500 issued to Lan et al. on June 5, 2001, discusses the use of onium ions to convert hydrophilic clay surfaces to hydrophobic one to enable enlarge the gallery height and bonding.

**It is well known that phyllosilicates, such as smectite clays, e.g., sodium montmorillonite and calcium montmorillonite, can be treated with organic molecules, such as organic ammonium ions, to intercalate the organic molecules between adjacent, planar silicate layers, for bonding the organic molecules with a polymer, for intercalation of the polymer between the layers, thereby substantially increasing the interlayer (interlaminar) spacing between the adjacent silicate layers.** The thus-treated, intercalated phyllosilicates, having interlayer spacings of at least about 10-20 .ANG. and up to about 100 Angstroms, then can be exfoliated, e.g., the silicate layers are separated, e.g., mechanically, by high shear mixing. **The individual silicate layers, when admixed with a matrix polymer, before, after or during the polymerization of the matrix polymer, e.g., a polyamide--see U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,739,007; 4,810,734; and 5,385,776--have been found to substantially improve one or more properties of the polymer, such as mechanical strength and/or high temperature characteristics.**

Exemplary prior art **composites**, also called "nanocomposites", are disclosed in published PCT disclosure of Allied Signal, Inc. WO 93/04118 and U.S. Pat. No. 5,385,776, disclosing the admixture of individual platelet particles derived from intercalated layered silicate materials, with a polymer to form a polymer matrix having one or more properties of the matrix polymer improved by the addition of the exfoliated intercalate. As disclosed in WO 93/04118, the intercalate is formed (the interlayer spacing between adjacent silicate platelets is increased) by adsorption of a silane coupling agent or an **onium** cation, such as a quaternary ammonium compound, having a reactive group which is compatible with the matrix polymer. **Such quaternary ammonium cations are well known to convert a highly hydrophilic clay, such as sodium or calcium montmorillonite, into an organophilic clay capable of sorbing organic molecules.** A publication that discloses direct intercalation (without solvent) of polystyrene and poly(ethylene oxide) in organically modified silicates is Synthesis and Properties of Two-Dimensional Nanostructures by Direct Intercalation of Polymer Melts in Layered Silicates, Richard A. Vaia, et al., Chem. Mater., 5:1694-1696(1993). Also as disclosed in Adv. Materials, 7, No. 2: (1985), pp, 154-156, New Polymer Electrolyte Nanocomposites: Melt Intercalation of Poly(Ethylene Oxide) in Mica-Type Silicates, Richard A. Vaia, et al.,

poly(ethylene oxide) can be intercalated directly into Na-montmorillonite and Li-montmorillonite by heating to 80.degree. C. for 2-6 hours to achieve a d-spacing of 17.7 .ANG.. The intercalation is accompanied by displacing water molecules, disposed between the clay platelets, with polymer molecules. Apparently, however, the intercalated material could not be exfoliated and was tested in pellet form. It was quite surprising to one of the authors of these articles that exfoliated material could be manufactured in accordance with the present invention.

The surface modification of the montmorillonite platelets and their integration into a polyamide or nylon polymer is an established art and not part of this disclosure. It was also described in considerable detail in "Synthesis and Characterisation of Thermoset-Clay Nanocomposites" by Xavier Kornman in a publication of Lulea Tekniska Universitet, Sweden. The specific goal of this disclosure is to specify the method of treatment of the platelets, the percentage of platelets within the matrix, the preferred method of compounding, the formation of the blank tubes which can be expanded into angiographic balloons for catheters, and the method of attaching the balloon to the catheter body.

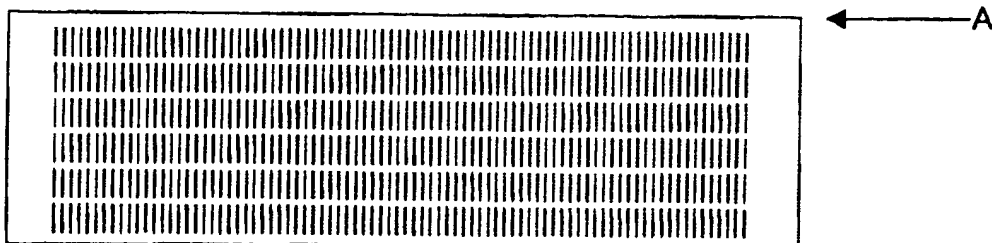
The balloon forming process may begin with a polymer sheet of specific thickness that may be cut and fused into tubes whose wall thickness is considerably greater than necessary for making balloons for angioplasty

catheters. Once the tubes are fused, they may be drawn down to the dimensions by well-established methods and formed into balloons by heating the thermoplastic tubes under internal pressure within a mold (blow molding). Another process will use an extruded thin wall tubing that is subsequently heat stretched in a controlled manner as to further reduce the wall thickness to the desired dimensions. The stretched tube or parison is later blow molded into the desired balloon shape.

The method of creating composites with carbon nanotubes is based on the compounding of 0.20- 20 percent of the available nanotubes in a polymer matrix, this may be achieved by dispersing the nanocomposite to the monomer followed by polymerization, or by dispersing the selected nanocomposite during conventional melt compounding. Again, tubes are formed with the nanotubes oriented primarily along the axis of the balloon.

To enhance the resistance of the balloon tangentially, the original compounding may be followed by rolling and stretching the polymer to orient the nanotubes in one direction and then forming the tubes such that the nanotubes are originally oriented tangentially in the wall of the tube:

Join edge A to edge B



← B

The tube is closed and sealed:



This tube is ready for being drawn out and then expanded. When it is in its final form, the orientation of the nanotubes should be somewhat randomized but oriented circumferentially on the average to increase the strength of the tube/balloon. An alternative process is to extrude the nanotube loaded polymer into thin wall tubes that will later be stretched and blow molded as required.

Naturally, the use of nanocomposites and nanotubes in thin tubular balloons is not limited to angioplasty in coronary vessels, but also to general area of medical applications of balloons, including valvuloplasty, the minimally invasive repair of heart valves, angioplasty and stent development in peripheral vessels, deployment of stents especially in the coronary and carotid arteries, the repair of aneurysms by the insertion of balloons, even the possibility to insert balloons in the stomach for the purpose of reducing the subject's appetite (in the past the procedure failed on account of the balloon tearing and obstructing the intestinal path). All of these and other applications are intended to employ the art behind this patent.

We claim:

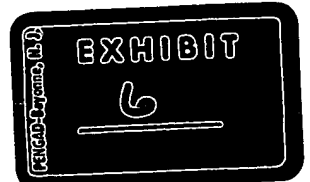
1. A nanocomposite reinforced polymer such as nylon 12, PET or any other suitable polymer formed into a super balloon for medical applications.
2. A nanotube reinforced polymer such as nylon 12, PET or any other suitable polymer formed into a super balloon for medical applications.
3. A nanocomposite and nanotube reinforced polymer such as nylon 12, PET or any other suitable polymer formed into a super balloon for medical applications.

## TELEFAX

DATE: 24 July 2001  
TO: Thomas Vigil  
FAX NUMBER: (847) 382-6895  
FROM: Oscar Jimenez  
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RE: \_\_\_\_\_  
MESSAGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
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FAX TO

TOM VIGIL

Tom:

I would like to  
add nanoscale ceramic  
fibers as a reinforcer  
for the super balloon  
patent. Please add  
language as required.

Regards,

OSCAR JIMENEZ

## NEWS & ANALYSIS

### Nanoscale Ceramic Fibers Smaller than DNA Molecule

Argonide Nanomaterials (Sanford, FL) has developed the first in a family of new products based on the use of alumina fiber. The fibers have a diameter of 2 nm, a surface area of 500-600 m<sup>2</sup>/g, and an aspect ratio (AR) ranging from 20 to 100. The company suggests that the small diameter and high AR makes the fibers "an ideal reinforcement for ceramic, metal, and plastic composites." The firm states that they are "smaller than the size of a DNA molecule," and suggests that they will be useful in reinforcing medical and dental devices.

Argonide indicates that the fibers, called Nanoceram, have diameters more than two orders of magnitude smaller than previously available discontinuous fibers.



*Smaller than a DNA molecule, alumina fibers can strengthen composites.*

The fibers have also resulted in significant increases in composite strength. Because the Nanoceram fibers have a higher surface area than particulate powders, the material is also expected to prove superior in forming ceramic membranes and membrane reactors.

This material was developed in collaboration with the Republican Engineering Technical Center in Tomsk, Siberia. Argonide indicates that it has a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy to employ approximately 60 former Soviet scientists; three U.S. national laboratories also contributed to the development project.

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